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U.S. EPA Program Aimed at Runoff, or “Nonpoint Source,” Pollution Funds California Watershed Restoration Efforts

California Water Boards leverage EPA support to protect water quality in Tomales Bay, Marin County, used for recreation and oyster production

SAN FRANCISCO – ~~California Water Boards~~ The California State Water Resources Control Board [the State Board] will use \$4.4 million of a U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) grant to fund projects in seven counties around the state. EPA’s annual Clean Water Act (CWA) Nonpoint Source Program grant assists the ~~Water Boards~~ State Board in implementing programs to address pollution caused by runoff moving over the ground, known as nonpoint source (NPS) pollution.

The Marin Resource Conservation District was awarded over \$700,000 by ~~California Water Boards~~ the State Board for their *Conserving Our Watersheds* (COW) Program. This project helps ranchers within the Point Reyes National Seashore prevent nitrogen, phosphorus, sediment, and bacteria from livestock operations from running off into Tomales Bay. Tomales Bay supports oyster production and recreational activities including kayaking and fishing.

“EPA is proud to promote the COW Program, which supports water quality improvements within Marin County’s watershed, reducing runoff of sediment, nutrients, and bacteria from ranching into Tomales Bay,” said EPA Pacific Southwest Director for the Office of Water Tomás Torres.

“Federal investment in nonpoint source solutions means the Water Board can support the Tomales Bay project and similar projects that are making water safer for our communities,” said **Joaquín Esquivel, Chair, California State Water Resources Control Board**. “When federal, state, and local leadership are aligned, opportunities to protect California’s most vulnerable watersheds expand exponentially.”

Six other NPS nonpoint source projects selected by the State Board are also being supported from through this EPA funding. Two projects address post-wildfire conditions:

- The Sonoma County Resource Conservation District was awarded \$342,000 for *Post-Fire Recovery and Sediment Reduction in Mark West Creek* in Sonoma County, and,
- The Earth Island Institute and South Coast Habitat Restoration were awarded \$799,000 for *Carpinteria Creek Sediment Reduction and Habitat Enhancement Project* in Santa Barbara County.

Commented [EL1]: I assume we are pluralizing “Boards” because we mean more than one Regional Board is funding these projects? If that is incorrect, and they are being funded by the statewide-level organization, I think they should be referred to as the “State Water Resources Control Board.” See [[HYPERLINK](#)

“https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/about_us/water_boards/_summary/”] – there is one State Water Resources Control Board and nine semi-autonomous Regional Boards. Based on our using a quote from Joaquín Esquivel, I assume we granted the funds at the State Board level.

Commented [LG2R1]: Technically correct – all funds are awarded by the State Board. That said, the State Board administers the funds on behalf of all the Water Boards (State Board and nine Regional Boards, all of whom implement the nonpoint source program).

Commented [EL3]: Again, I imagine we mean that the individual local Water Board (singular) awarded these funds, and perhaps we should name that Board outright. In this case, it’s the San Francisco Regional Water Quality Control Board – RWQCB – I see from the quote that these funds must have come from the State Board.

Commented [EL4]: I learned from Alexandra in a different press release review that AP Style says that items in a bulleted list should each be capitalized and end in a period. This is the opposite of the way I use bulleted lists (I prefer your style here), but I bow to the AP for this purpose!

Four additional projects address riparian habitat restoration:

- California Trout, Inc. was awarded \$674,000 for *Hart Ranch Stock Watering and Riparian Fence Project* to support riparian restoration in the Little Shasta River in Siskiyou County.
- The Eel River Recovery Project was awarded \$474,000 for *Tenmile Creek Streambank Erosion Prevention and Riparian Restoration Project* in Mendocino County.
- The Truckee River Watershed Council was awarded \$590,000 for Phase 1 of the Euer Valley Restoration Project in Nevada County, and
- The Napa County Department of Public Works was awarded \$800,000 for Phase 2 of the Napa River Restoration: Oakville to Oak Knoll, Group D, in Napa County.

Since 2004, the ~~Water Boards~~ State Board's Nonpoint Source Program has awarded over \$65 million of EPA grant funds for local projects that reduce runoff pollution into California's waters. The projects make waters safer for people and wildlife by preventing sediment erosion from rural roads and wildfire-impacted areas, controlling pollution from grazing and livestock operations, supporting farmers to plant cover crops to improve soil health, and restoring stream habitat affected by legacy timber activities.

In December, EPA approved California's 2020-2025 Nonpoint Source Program Implementation Plan, which made the ~~state~~ State Board eligible for EPA grant funds to support their programs. In 2021, ~~California Regional Water Quality Control Board~~ the State Board is ~~are~~ eligible to apply to the State Board to access ~~for~~ for \$9 million in federal funds to support statewide programs to address priority nonpoint sources of pollution, conduct inspections, and work with stakeholders to find effective solutions for water quality problems.

For more information on California's Nonpoint Source (NPS) Pollution Control Program visit: [HYPERLINK "https://www.waterboards.ca.gov/water_issues/programs/nps/"]

For more EPA information on nonpoint source pollution visit: [HYPERLINK "<https://www.epa.gov/nps/basic-information-about-nonpoint-source-nps-pollution>"]

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Commented [EL5]: We abbreviated (NPS) in paragraph 1 and used it once in paragraph 2, and then spelled it out fully in these last 2 paragraphs. I suggest we don't need to abbreviate it in the earlier paragraph. If we really are only using the acronym once, I took it out up top.

Commented [EL6]: Oh dear. So the Regional Boards did apply individually after all? I wonder if Water Division needs to have another look at this doc to confirm we are consistently addressing the State Board or Regional Board's involvement correctly.

Commented [LG7R6]: Technically it is the State Board who applies and then allocates PY to the Regional Boards (and awards implementation grants on behalf of the Regional Boards). That said, it is a statewide nonpoint source program run by the Water Boards writ large (State Board and 9 Regional Boards). Edited accordingly.